

## **ABSTRACT**

A multimedia communication system includes a host computer having an external bus and a unit external to the host computer. The unit is connected to the host computer via the external bus. The unit is configured to capture a video stream from a video input device, to convert the captured video stream according to a predetermined standard for transmitting video over a network, and to send the converted video stream to the host computer via the external bus. The system also includes a software video decoder installed on the host computer.